Photo by Hans Gutknecht

Canyon Country resident Rick Crow, a stock car racer at Saugus Speedway, helps keep his mother's memory alive through racing. Crow's mother, Peggy, was an avid racing fan who died last December after a long bout with cancer.

In Loving Memory

Auto racing is tribute to mother for Crow

By TIM TREPANY
Signal sports editor

When Rick Crow rolled his stock car out on the Saugus Speedway track for the first race of the season, he looked up into the stands where his family usually sits and started crying.

That moment was just another painful reminder his mother, Peggy, had passed away.

"I looked up expecting Mom to be there and she wasn't," said Crow, whose mother sat one section over from the announcer, five rows from the top, during every race.

Looking for her reassuring smile like a boy waiting for milk and cookies has been a habit the 26-year-old Canyon Country resident has had trouble breaking.

Even though she died last December after a long bout with cancer, he often finds himself talking as if his mother were still alive.

"One time after she died I cut my foot and said, 'I have to call Mom and find out when I had my last tetanus shot.' " Crow recalls with a touch of sadness.

He had a special relationship with his mother, a much closer bond than his brother and sister.

He was the troublemaker in the family, but somehow — instinctively — his mother always seemed to understand her precocious son.

"Her and I were a lot alike," Crow said. "She was kind of a rowdy kid who came around and made something of herself and I was the kind of kid who wanted to do everything. I was the one my parents worried about."

Although he has trouble accepting his mother's death, Crow is comforted by knowing he'll someday see her again in heaven.

"I baptized her into the Mormon Church. Now that's really important to me because if you believe what the church believes about living eternally as a family, then everybody has to be baptized. For me to baptize her makes it easy for me now because I know someday I'll be with her in heaven, which makes it nice."

Crow converted to Mormonism 10 years ago after some missionaries rode up on bicycles while he and his brother, Greg, were playing basketball.

"They asked us if we wanted to hear about the gospel of Jesus Christ," Crow said. "They started talking to us and my brother grasped it first."

Greg was soon baptized into the Mormon faith, with Rick following suit. Within a year, their sister Connie and father Vern converted.

But Peggy held out.

She was a heavy smoker and feared

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